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ABSTRACT

Underage drinking is a major problem across the country. Many communities are trying to reduce the injuries and deaths that occur as a result of this problem. Community groups have been instrumental in working at the state level to pass stricter laws curbing underage drinking and to tighten the laws that already exist. This paper provides tips and resources to help communities undertake the needed measures to reduce alcohol and substance abuse. It contains a list of national organizations, publications, and community leaders with expertise in underage drinking. Stories of how some communities have responded to the problem are presented. (JDM)

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UNDERAGE DRINKING

Technical Assistance Packet

Join Together:
A National Resource for Communities Fighting Substance Abuse and Gun Violence

www.jointogether.org

April 2000

ED 456 355

Description of the Issue

According to the National Highway Safety Transportation Administration, 2,209 youth died in alcohol-related crashes in 1997. This represents a 5% decline from the previous year. However, underage drinking is still a major problem across the country and many communities have chosen to try and reduce the injuries and deaths that occur as a result of drinking and driving. For example, community groups have worked on the state level to pass stricter laws to curb underage drinking and make enforcement of existing laws a higher priority.

What follows is a list of national organizations, publications, community leaders with an expertise in underage drinking, and community stories.

National Organizations

National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) is the nation's largest repository of alcohol, tobacco and other drug information. They offer a host of information for youth, parents, schools and community leaders on how to prevent and reduce underage drinking. Materials include the results of the latest studies and surveys, helpful guides, videocassettes, pamphlets and brochures from the Public Health Service. Many of these materials are available in bulk quantities and free of charge.
P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20847-2345; Tel: 800-729-6686; Eml: info@health.org; www.health.org

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)
Teen Drinking Prevention Program
CSAP develops many of the prevention materials disseminated by NCADI. They support community-based initiatives to prevent underage drinking and drug use with funding and technical assistance. The Teen Drinking Prevention Program develops and implements community-based prevention campaigns to promote effective health communications strategies to prevent underage alcohol use in cities across the country. For more information on CSAP programs and funding, contact the National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686 or via the web at www.health.org/.

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Mothers Against Drunk Driving—MADD
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is a non-profit grassroots organization with more than 600 chapters nationwide. Its focus is to look for effective solutions to drunk driving and underage drinking problems, while supporting the victims of these crimes. They offer great resources for legislative advocacy and statistics to communicate the scope of underage drinking and drunk driving. For more information, to locate your local chapter or to start one up, contact MADD at 511 E. John Carpenter Freeway, Suite 700, Irving, TX 75062; Tel: 214-744-6233; Eml: info@madd.org; www.madd.org.

Students Against Destructive Decisions (Formerly Students Against Drunk Driving)—SADD
SADD provides students with prevention and intervention strategies to help them deal with the issues of underage drinking, impaired driving, substance abuse, and violence. SADD has chapters across the country, which are run by young people. Contact the national program office to learn more about chapters in your community or to start one yourself.
SADD National Office, Box 800, Marlboro, MA 01752; Tel: 800-787-5777;
www.saddonline.com/

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program
This $50 million program of block grants, discretionary programs, and training and technical assistance is helping all 50 States and the District of Columbia develop comprehensive and coordinated initiatives to enforce state laws that prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors and to prevent the purchase or consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors. Publications are also available online at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/enforcing/enforreso.html or contact:

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Publications and How to Order Them

The publications listed here are both free and of modest cost.

- *Save Lives! A Join Together Public Policy Panel Report*
  Recommendations and action steps to help communities reduce underage drinking.
  Join Together, 441 Stuart Street, 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02116; Tel: 617-437-1500; Eml: info@jointogether.org; www.jointogether.org/publications

- *Communities Take Charge: A Manual for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems*
  University of Medicine and Dentistry at New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, 675 Hoes Lane, Room N110, Piscataway, NJ 08854-5635; Tel: 732-235-4576

- *The Zero Tolerance Resource Kit*
  National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 7th Street, SW, Room 5130 (NTS-21), Washington, DC 20590; Tel: 202-366-1836; www.nhtsa.dot.gov/

Community Leaders

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Community Stories

Stories listed below are reprinted from Join Together Online. Similar stories can be found at www.jointogether.org.

NJ Coalition Launches Statewide Underage Drinking Campaign

Enlisting the aid of retailers, parents and the media, a prevention coalition in New Jersey has launched a statewide effort to cut down on underage drinking, dubbed 'We Check for 21.' This three-phase project includes reaching out to retailers statewide with an educational and advocacy campaign designed to improve compliance with the state's drinking-age law. Alcohol sellers were asked to sign a pledge to demand ID from young buyers, and the Network provided employee-oriented information, training and materials, including 'We Check for 21' signage.

In the first year, about 600 of the state's approximately 11,000 bars, restaurants and supermarkets licensed to sell alcohol agreed to take part in the program. The goal for the coming year is to recruit an additional 840 retailers through a mix of mail solicitations and personal appeals. The Network is also counting on peer pressure among retailers to increase participation in the campaign. In addition to grassroots advocacy, the group has secured endorsements for the project from the state ABC office, the New Jersey Restaurant Association, and the New Jersey Licensed

Beverage Association. The latter groups have sent letters and newsletters to their membership detailing the campaign and urging participation.

Funded primarily by the state Department of Health and Senior Services and also the New Jersey Highway Traffic Safety Commission, the three-year 'We Check for 21' project will also include a parents' component in its second year, called, 'We Check for 21, Too.' A third piece of New Jersey's environmental prevention campaign against underage drinking will focus on the media. For more information on the 'We Check for 21' campaign, Eml: njpn@americom.net.

Drawing the Line on Under 21 Alcohol Use

Drawing the line is a public-private partnership in Montgomery County, Maryland that uses a comprehensive approach to keep young people safe from the harmful effects of underage alcohol use. Between 30 and 40 organizations and individuals across the county have come together to change community perception and reaction to underage alcohol use. The work that the coalition has done has helped most people in Montgomery County to realize that underage drinking is illegal, unhealthy and unacceptable.

Drawing the Line educates young people and adults about the dangers of underage alcohol use and brings businesses and community organizations together to support alcohol-free youth and lifestyles. Laws against providing or selling alcohol to minors and against possession of alcohol by minors are strictly enforced. Members of Drawing the Line work with legislators to ensure that necessary laws, such as keg registration and adult responsibility are in place. The Health and Human Services agencies ensure that those young people who are charged with underage drinking receive a substance abuse assessment and are referred for treatment or education. For more information on Drawing the Line contact Nancy Rea at reana@co.mo.md.us or 240-777-112, or visit their website at www.co.mo.md.us/hhs/drawingtheline.